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SUBJECT: TAWAFUQ GRUMBLES OVER HEALTH; FADHILA CONTINUES TO  
SULK, FOR NOW

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) A  
ND (D).

¶1. (C) Tawafuq negotiator Ali Baban told Poloff May 15 that PM designate Nuri al-Maliki had informed the Sunni Arab bloc that they would not receive, as expected, the Health Ministry. Baban predicted that the Sadr movement would get the ministry instead. Baban said that in compensation, Tawafuq had asked for the Transportation Ministry -- for bloc negotiator Hasan Degan -- and the position of Minister of State for Arab Affairs -- for IIP's Rafia al-Issawi.

¶2. (C) In a May 16 exchange with Poloff, VP Tarik al-Hashimi also raised the Health Ministry issue, noting his unhappiness that Maliki was no longer offering it to Tawafuq. He said Tawafuq had asked for the Transportation ministry in its place but Maliki had not yet responded. Hashimi said Tawafuq also expected the Ministry of Planning and the State Ministries for Arab Affairs and Civil Society. He said he was angry with Baban that Tawafuq had not demanded the Human Rights ministry and insisted that Tawafuq must get either the Ministry of Human Rights or of Justice. Poloff encouraged al-Hashimi to encourage a quick resolution to remaining differences on cabinet formation.

¶3. (C) Al-Hashimi dismissed fellow Tawafuq leader Khalaf Alayan's threats to withdraw his National Dialogue Party from the government should he not get the Defense Ministry. VP Hashimi said Alayan's demand was "ridiculous." He laughed about the reported offer to Hewan's Saleh Mutlak of the State Ministry for National Dialogue and commented that the only thing that Mutlak has in common with national dialogue is the name of his political party.

¶4. (C) In a May 15 phone conversation with Pol/FSN, Fadhila Party Council of Representatives member Sheikh Sabah Jalub Faleh al-Saedi said that, the previous evening, the Fadhila Party politburo had met and reaffirmed its decision to not participate in cabinet formation negotiations. Al-Saedi said that nothing could convince the Fadhila leadership to change their minds. However, on May 16, Fadhila Council of Representatives member Mohamed Ismail told us that the party may return to government negotiations following an appeal from Dawa leaders to Fadhila's spiritual leader Ayatollah Yaqubi.  
KHALILZAD